United Nations A/ES-10/784–S/2018/510

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
5 June 2018

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 29 May 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Since 30 March 2018, we have been repeatedly compelled to draw your attention to the illegal actions being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people, in particular in the Gaza Strip in the context of the Great March of Return. Such criminal actions by the occupying Power, including the lethal use of force against unarmed civilian protesters, have exacerbated the already-severe protection crisis being endured by our people and risk the further ratcheting-up of tensions and destabilization of the situation, with grave consequences.

It is urgent that the international community act, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant resolutions, to immediately address this situation in order to de-escalate this dangerous situation, to deter further violence and to protect civilian lives. In this regard, we reiterate our unequivocal stance against any and all forms of violence against civilians.

Today's cycle of violence underscores the urgency of action. Throughout the day, Israel has launched numerous air strikes against the occupied and besieged Gaza Strip, threatening to fully ignite another round of deadly violence and further threatening international peace and security. We condemn in the strongest terms these Israeli military attacks on the densely populated Gaza Strip, which are further endangering civilian lives and causing damage and destruction to civilian property, including, inter alia, a school.

This escalation in violence follows weeks of Israeli aggression against Palestinian civilian protesters in Gaza, in which Israeli occupying forces killed 118 Palestinians, including children. One of the victims, Nasser Aaref al-Ureini, age 28, succumbed to his wounds just yesterday, 28 May, raising the death toll. A total of 13,000 Palestinians have been injured, with many requiring further surgery and medical treatment and many disabled for life. Today's escalation also follows the killing of four other Palestinians in Gaza by Israeli tank fire yesterday, 28 May, which provoked today's cycle of violence.

18-09085 (E) 110618

Please recycle

Moreover, it cannot be forgotten that this escalation is happening against the backdrop of more than 50 years of Israel's foreign occupation and brutal repression, collective punishment and the humiliation of the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza through a suffocating, illegal and inhumane air, land and sea blockade.

In this regard, we must remind you that Israel is the occupying Power, having committed, and continuing to commit, an endless list of atrocities and war crimes against the Palestinian people that it has occupied, besieged and oppressed for decades. We should never blur the lines between legal actions that can be taken by States to ensure security, in line with the Charter and international law, and actions that, in fact, constitute violations of international law and war crimes. There can be no justification for Israel's continued illegal occupation of and aggression against our people, nor for its illegal blockade of Gaza, nor for its continued colonization of our land.

Furthermore, Israel cannot claim a right to security for the occupying Power while callously denying the occupied people their right to security. In this regard, we have stated repeatedly and reiterate once more: the right to security is not exclusive to Israel, but rather a right for all, including the Palestinian people.

Statements by Israeli officials are foreboding and must not be ignored. This includes recent statements by the Prime Minister of Israel, who has pledged to use "great force" against Gaza, and by the Israeli intelligence minister, who has stated that Israel was "closest to the threshold of war" since 2014. Such inflammatory statements and incitement reveal the true intentions of the occupying Power to intensify its actions and plunge the area into another deadly and destructive cycle of violence, regardless of the consequences and with total disregard for the calls for the immediate cessation of violence and de-escalation of the situation.

Such threats of further escalation will only ensure the loss of more innocent civilian lives among the occupied and defenceless Palestinian population. It will only lead to the further deterioration of the already-dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where nearly 2 million Palestinians continue to live in deep isolation and deprivation and have still not recovered from the effects of the massive human devastation and physical destruction caused by previous Israeli military aggressions against Gaza, as well as from the mass casualties sustained as a result of Israel's shooting of peaceful Palestinian protesters over the past few weeks.

We call on the international community, including the Security Council, to act forthwith to bring an immediate halt to this escalation of violence and to demand that Israel, the occupying Power, fully and scrupulously abide by its legal obligations under the Charter and as an occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

At this time, I must also draw your attention to the continuation of Israel's illegal colonization of Palestinian land, including the destruction, theft and confiscation of Palestinian lands and properties, the construction and expansion of both settlements and the Wall, and the forcible transfer of Palestinian communities in a continuation of our ongoing dispossession and Nakbah.

In this regard, the recent period has seen measures aimed at the forcible transfer of Palestinian Bedouin communities from within and around Occupied East Jerusalem, including the sensitive "E-1" area, for the construction and expansion of settlements. These measures not only are in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, thus constituting war crimes, but also threaten to completely sever the West Bank from East Jerusalem, destroying any chance of implementing the two-State solution.

For years, Israel has been advancing its plans to forcibly transfer the Bedouin population of the Khan al-Ahmar area north-east of Occupied East Jerusalem, the

majority of whom are Palestine refugees, in order to facilitate the expansion of its illegal settlements. We have drawn the attention of the international community to this urgent situation numerous times, including in regard to the repeated demolition by Israeli occupation forces of Khan al-Ahmar's makeshift homes and schools. Regrettably, our calls have never been met with concrete action aimed at deterring the occupying Power from the perpetration of these crimes.

On 24 May, the Israeli so-called Supreme Court approved the demolition and forcible transfer of the entire community of Khan al-Ahmar Abu al-Helu, home to 35 Palestinian families and with a total population of 180 civilians, for the purpose of constructing thousands of new illegal settlement units. According to the Israeli plan, the community will most likely be forcibly relocated to an area near a landfill in Abu Dis. The Palestinian structures set for demolition include a primary school, which was built in 2009 by the Italian aid organization Vento Di Terra and serves 170 children from five different Bedouin communities in the East Jerusalem area.

The cumulative result of all of these ongoing illegal Israeli policies and actions is the deepening of the protection crisis being endured by the Palestinian civilian population. We thus renew our call on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to uphold its obligations under the Charter, international law and all relevant resolutions pertaining to the rights and protection of civilians in armed conflict, including foreign occupation. We reiterate that the Palestinian civilian population under Israel's occupation, including in the Gaza Strip, must be guaranteed protection and cannot remain the exception to the obligations and commitments made to protect civilians in all circumstances from atrocities and flagrant breaches of the law.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 637 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432–S/2000/921) to 25 May 2018 (A/ES-10/783–S/2018/505), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations